

Survey Sees Need for More Sidewalks

By SUSANNA SHEEHAN

Developing more sidewalks in Duxbury was the focus of a discussion this week between selectmen and the local sidewalk/bike path committee.

The committee presented the results of its autumn questionnaire, which found that the majority of people responding favored adding more sidewalks and bike paths in town.

Sidewalk and Bike Path Committee chairman Jeff Lewis told selectmen Monday night that of the 365 responses to the 14-question survey, 76 percent favored more sidewalks in Duxbury. An even larger majority, 85

percent, wanted more bike paths. The survey was conducted over the Internet and available in hard copy at the library from August to October. The questionnaire's purpose was to "gauge the opinion of residents about adding sidewalks and bike paths in the community," according to the committee's report.

Residents were asked if they walked or cycled and if so why they did and what problems they experienced. They were also asked for their safety concerns and if they would walk or bike more often if there were new facilities for these activities.

Also, the survey tried to determine residents' attitudes about sidewalks and bike paths along their own streets, in other parts of town, and through wooded areas. They were also asked a few questions about the recent Chestnut Street sidewalk project.

The majority of respondents, 97 percent, said they walk or bicycle for exercise or recreation. Their biggest safety concern was staying away from traffic and they felt that the lack of sidewalks combined with too much traffic deterred people from doing more walking or biking. Over 80 percent said they would get out more of sidewalks or bike paths linked community destinations, and more than 70 percent said they would venture out more frequently if there were more sidewalks and bike paths in their neighborhoods. When asked what objections they had to sidewalks and bike paths, residents' answers varied from

feeling that they would hurt the natural beauty and character of the town to being against them because of encroachment on private property. Others felt sidewalks/bike paths were too costly, just weren't needed or that they would cause traffic speeds to increase.

Eighty-two percent of residents who responded to the questionnaire said that building more sidewalks and bike paths should be a priority for the town and that the town should come up with a network of multi-use paths to connect destinations.

Selectman Andre Martecchini wanted to know what the committee's next

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**-Jeff Lewis,
sidewalk and bike path
committee chairman**

step would be.

"It's not surprising, the results," said Martecchini. "Where do you go from here?"

He mentioned linking an area from Tobey Garden St./Chestnut St. past the fire station, senior center, cemetery to the town hall. "I'd rather concentrate on a few projects we've been talking about," said Martecchini. The link from Chestnut St. to the town hall "is pretty doable without huge costs," he said.

He also suggested the committee call a meeting of Washington St. residents and see how much support there is for a sidewalk on that street. In August, Department of Public Works director Tom Daley unveiled a plan to make major changes to Washington St., including a 5-foot sidewalk that ran its length. Total cost of road improvements and the sidewalk was estimated at \$940,000. At the time, selectmen only supported paving the road in order to make it passable after a summer of being torn up from construction. Martecchini said that before the town put the final coat of pavement on Washington St., it should see if there is any support for Daley's plan.

Coincidentally, the largest number of responses to the questionnaire came from Washington St. residents. Of the 21 Washington St. responses, 16 favored a sidewalk on their street, and three did not. Eleven supported a bike path on their street and four did not.

Lewis said it was his "vision" to get

sidewalks/bike paths along the more dangerous, heavily traveled streets to connect them to other areas.

"There is an ever increasing need on the safety side for more sidewalks and bike paths," said Lewis.

In other business, selectmen:

- Approved an aquaculture grant for Claire Bezdek after continuing a public hearing on her application three times. Bezdek, of Marshall St., was forced to find another location for her proposed shellfish farm after local commercial shellfishermen objected to her first location, saying there were clams on it. Aquaculture grants must be barren of shellfish and eel grass and must not have or have had any shellfishing activity on them in the past. Bezdek's new location is three acres approximately 500 yards north of Hunt's Flat in Duxbury Bay. Bezdek plans to grow oysters in hard structures on her grant. The Shellfish Advisory Board recommended approval for her application.

- Approved liquor license renewals for 11 establishments that serve or sell alcohol or wine/beer. They are the Milepost, Tsang's Café, the Wildflower restaurant, the North Hill Country Club, the Veteran's Club, the Village at Duxbury, Osborn's Country Store, Bennett's, Millbrook Market, the Wine Depot and Duxbury Wine and Spirits. Four businesses were not issued licenses until they clear up outstanding issues, which include any of the following: obtain-

ing the necessary inspectional certificates, payment of back-taxes, proof of worker's compensation and/or server training. These establishments are the Sun Tavern, the Winsor House, Duxbury General Store and La Maison du Vin. Selectmen plan to vote on these licenses on December 12 if issues surrounding them are resolved.

- Executed a quit claim deed for a 1/8th acre parcel at 48 Winslow St. to Charles and Sheila Gavoni of Winslow St. for \$5,251.17. In 1996, annual town meeting voters unanimously approved the transfer of the unbuildable lot to the Gavonis. The town foreclosed upon this property in 1983 for back taxes. The Gavonis asked selectmen for assistance in finalizing the land transfer in October.